

A Proposal for Re-structuring of Nurses and Midwives' Promotions and Ranks toward an Advance Professional Practice in Ghana

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Abstract

Staff promotion is the advancement of an employees' rank or position in an organizational hierarchical system. A Study explains that promotion when and wherever it happens, comes with two impressions: the monetary aspect and the change of position from lower to higher in the organizational hierarchy. This study aims at presenting a proposal for re-structuring of Nurses and Midwives' promotions and ranks toward an advance professional practice in Ghana. A descriptive, phenomenological qualitative study was used. The study established that ranking and promotions in nursing and midwifery should be based on qualification and experience and not just number of years served in the health sector. The respondents largely added that for nurses and midwives to be academically active with apt skills in their respective fields, promotions should also be based on some number of scholarly papers published in reputed journals. Accordingly, the Nursing and Midwifery Council must ensure that nurses and midwives adhere to these protocols towards ranking and remuneration. In conclusion, ranking is beneficial for the advancement of the nursing and midwifery professions in Ghana.

Keywords: Ghana, Nurses and midwives, Promotions, Professional practice, Ranks, Re-structuring.

Introduction

Abdul-Kahar [1], defined staff promotion as the advancement of an employee's rank or position in an organizational hierarchical system. Abdul-Mumuni [2] explains that promotion when and wherever it happens, it comes with two impressions: the monetary aspect and the change of position from lower to higher in the organizational hierarchy. Promotion takes place as a result of a reward to employees for hard work or for additional qualifications in their areas of endeavour, which "boost individuals' moral and a mark of recognition" [2].

One major publication "Future of Nursing Report" that made an impact in nursing education [3] recommends nearly all entry-level nurses (80%) to hold a bachelor's degree by

2020. Clearly Ghana is far behind this call. However, this push toward increased nursing education does not apply only to the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) but also for higher degrees. Doctoral degrees have seen a particular push from many nursing organizations, including the Institute of Medicine (IOM) [3].

Promotion has several meanings to different professional bodies. This study refers to staff promotion as entrenched in employees' terms and conditions of service and work [4]. The attributes or factors to be considered in staff promotion are experience and knowledge gained on-the-job, qualification, leadership skills, can do ability, good interpersonal relations, commitment to deliver/hard work, and punctuality [4]. Job enrichment, job enlargement, whom you know, who knows you,

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and friendship, among others should be avoided in staff promotion [5]. Instead, staff promotion must be in line with the general long-term budgets estimates and allocations to apply promotion processes and procedures appropriately, efficiently, and effectively.

Some reports [6], [7], indicated that Staff promotion in the public sector of Ghana in recent times is worrying. The reports revealed that the country is struggling to manage its purse in terms of salaries and wages payments. The reports have always been about staff payment problems that also have to do with ghost names in the payroll register [4]. With increasing advance in nursing education, and midwives' promotions and ranks will soon be an issue [4, 5]. Staff could be stacked at one grade due to limited grades for more. The current nursing and midwifery promotions and ranks need changes in line with nursing education and modification, hence this study.

The field of nursing is a constantly growing field, which corresponds to the creation of more levels of nursing professionals as the health care system changes [8]. One of the hardest decisions for young nurses is choosing a field of study for a degree [9]. Going back to school to get a higher degree or certification is about "creating opportunities for yourself" [9]. The importance of degree to an individual can open multiple doors and help one to find out one's passion [10]. Also, some hospitals require master's degree as entry into management. A degree is an opportunity to learn new skills and produces a more rounded nurse [9]. Nurses who graduate from bachelor's degree programmes typically qualify for supervisory, rather than entry-level positions [11].

A nursing research unit at King's College University, London revealed that a few years into their career, despite the professions high vacancy rate, many nurses are not where they envisaged, they would be [12]. Most senior roles require nurses to possess a range of experience and skills including clinical specialisation, research, management, and education [12]. To

progress or be promoted, the nurse needs knowledge and competence in every aspect of his/her current role [12, 13].

Justification

The increasing scope of nursing education will continue to grow as nurses become lead providers of health care. As a result of advancement in nursing, there is the need to review nurses and midwives' promotions and ranks to commensurate with other analogous professions. In the light of this, this study will.

1. Help to suggest some modification of nursing ranking system in Ghana.
2. Help suggest ways to transform promotions in nursing in Ghana.
3. Help in the advancement of nursing as a profession.

The nursing profession has seen a magnificent growth in recent years. Due to the desire for professional entry qualification to be at bachelor's degree level, to increase nurses and midwives bargaining power in the labour front. The current promotion system and ranks do not address the advances in nursing education. Once one completed nursing training college with Diploma, the highest rank of Director of Nursing Services can be obtained, which does not factor in education from Diploma to PhD. It is important to undertake a study on promotions and ranks of nurses and midwives so as to make a proposal to stakeholders for a review.

Study Objectives

Main Objective

To present a proposal for re-structuring of Nurses and Midwives' promotions and ranks toward an advance professional practice in Ghana.

Specific Objectives

1. To evaluate the current nursing promotions and ranks structure in Ghana.
2. To determine a modified nursing ranks structure with advancing education in Ghana.

3. To propose nursing research as a requirement for nursing promotions in Ghana.

Methodology

Study Setting

The study was conducted in Tamale Metropolis in the Northern region of Ghana. It is in the central part of the Northern Region and its capital is Tamale. The Metropolis shares boundaries with Sagnarigu District in the North, East Gonja in the south, Mion Districts in the West and central Gonja and Tolon District to the East. This setting was chosen because it is the regional capital of the Northern Region and has all categories of Nurses and midwives.

Study Design

It is a descriptive, phenomenological qualitative study. This method emphasises an understanding of human experience as it is lived, usually through the careful collection and analysis of qualitative data that are narrative and subjective [14].

Target Population

The study targeted nurse managers, nurses, principals of nurses and midwives training schools, nursing association leaders and nursing and midwifery council. This is because they form part of the stakeholders of nurses and midwives and have enough knowledge on the subject matter.

Sample Size

The study sample size was determined by data saturation. Data saturation is when the researcher perceives an end due to no new information emerging [15]. The sample size for the study consisted of twenty-one nurses and midwives.

Sampling Technique

The study used purposive sampling technique to select participants for the study. This sampling allows the researcher decides what purpose he or

she wants informants to serve and goes out to find some.

Study Instrument

In-depth face to face interviews were conducted using a Semi-structured interview guide to conduct interview with participants. The interview guide contained open ended questions with few closed ended questions which were developed based on the objectives of the study.

The interview guide was divided into two sections. The first section was mainly collected demographic data while the second section consisted of main questions and probes.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was done when a participant consented to be part of the study after explanation of the purpose of the study to him/her. After that the researcher proceeded to conduct interview with the respondents.

Data Management

After every interview the researchers immediately transcribed data from the field. This was to ensure accurate information emanating from the interview proceedings. The interviews were recorded in an audiotape to serve as a backup for data analysis.

Data Analysis and Presentation of Findings

Data was analyzed through thematic content analysis. This is a method that describes the presentation of qualitative data. According to Anderson, et al. [16], the method has to do with looking across all the data to identify the main themes that summarize all the views collected. Data was sorted, coded, and put to sub-themes and themes for easy understanding by readers.

Ethical Consideration

The principles of benefits and risk, informed consent and confidentiality were applied. Permission was sought from the various health facilities and institutions with an introductory

letter from the Nursing Department, University for Development Studies. The researchers explained the purpose, objectives and potential benefits and risk to participants in their preferred language and gave them ample time to decide on their participation.

Results/ Findings

Nine (9) main themes emerged in the study, these include: Satisfaction of ranks and promotions, Modification of ranks and promotions, proposed ranks and salaries, Level of education with promotions and ranks, Ranks structure and level of education, Promotion and duration, Nursing research, Research publication and Nursing education. Some of these themes are described with supporting quotes from the interview. In the presentation of the results, the demographic characteristics are presented first followed by the themes.

Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

In the study, twenty-one (21) nurses and midwives participated, comprising eleven (11)

males and ten (10) females, sixteen (16) Registered General Nurses, three (3) midwives and two (2) who were both Nurses and Midwives. The majority, twelve (12) belongs to the age category of 31-40 years, followed by 51-60 years (4), 20-30 years (3) and the least being 41-50 years with two (2). Also, most of the respondents had degree twelve (12) with eight (8) masters and one certificate holder. Most of the respondents were SNOs/SMOs seven (7) with income of 2,272.75 Ghana Cedi; the next is NOs/MOs six (6) with 2,089.04 Ghana cedi. The PNOs /PMOs and DDNS were three (3) each with income of 2,877.69 and 3,293.15 Ghana cedi respectively. Few were SNs/SMs two (2) with income of 1,649.88 Ghana cedi. All the twenty-one (21) respondents understood and were fluent in English language. In addition, all participants live within the Tamale Metropolis and are Ghanaian by national. Religions professed by participants were mainly Christianity (14) and Islam (7).

Most (15) of respondents were married and only few (6) were not married.

Table 1. Organization of Themes

Themes	Subthemes
Satisfaction of ranks and promotions	Satisfaction of nurses and midwives' ranks
Modification of ranks and promotions	Satisfaction of nurses and midwives' promotions
Why modification?	Modification of ranks
Proposed ranks and salaries	Modification of promotions
Level of education with promotions and ranks	Reasons for modification
Ranks structure and level of education	Proposed ranks
Promotion and duration	Proposed salaries
Nursing research	Level of education according to Promotions
Research publication	Level of education according to ranks
Nursing education	Proposed ranks structure with level of education
-	Duration of promotion
-	Importance of nursing research
-	Research publication as a criterion for promotion
-	Entry point of nursing profession

Respondents' Satisfaction of the Current Nurses and Midwives Ranks and Promotions

The current Nurses and Midwives ranks and promotions in Ghana has brought dissatisfaction to the profession as many nurses and midwives expressed their dissatisfaction of the current nurses and midwives ranks and promotions with various reasons such as discrepancies, no impact of ranks and promotions on the profession, ranks and promotions based on documentation and policy and many ranks.

Satisfaction of Nurses and Midwives' Ranks

Most nurses and midwives expressed their dissatisfaction about the current nurses and midwives' promotion discrepancies, no impact of ranks and promotions on the profession, ranks and promotions based on documentation and policy. Peter (interview two) recounts that:

Respondent (interview 9) stated:

"I am not satisfied with the higher positions; I think they should be more. For instance, I think there should be PNO and assistant PNO positions so that those who are still vibrant can get to PNO and those who have BSc and above can proceed from PNO to DDNS" (INTERVIEW 9).

Satisfaction of Nurses and Midwives' Promotion

Nurses and midwives expressed the same dissatisfaction of the current nurses and midwives' promotion with various reasons. Nineteen of the respondents agreed that they were dissatisfied with the current nurses and midwives' promotion with following reasons: Discrepancies, no impact of promotions on the profession, promotions based on documentation and policy. Peter (interview two) recounts that:

"Nurses and midwifery promotions are based on the academic level of nursing as at those days. Nursing has far advanced that they should not be limited to certain promotions" (interview 2).

Modification of Ranks and Promotions

The various categories of nurses and midwives admitted that there is the need for modification of the nurses and midwives ranks in Ghana.

Modification of Nurses and Midwives' Ranks

Almost all respondents twenty (20) indicated the need to modify the nurses and midwives' ranks. Only one respondent responded no to this question with the reason that nurses' ranks has been existing, and we can't do anything about them. She stated:

"Nurses ranks should not be modified because nursing has already changed but nurses have not changed their attitude" (INTERVIEW12).

Modification of Nurses and Midwives' Promotion

Similarly, for the modification of the nurses' promotions, twenty (20) respondents revealed that the nurses and midwives' promotions need to be modified to suit the international standard of nurses and midwifery and other professional promotions. On the contrary, one respondent again, responded differently to the question just as for the ranks.

Reasons for Modification

On the reason for modification of Nurses and Midwives ranks and promotions, the majority, eight (8) of the respondents indicated that it should be modified to suit current nursing dynamics and career progression, six (6) respondent indicated that nurses ranks and promotions should be modified to avoid many ranks and stagnation, four (4) had the view that degree nurses and midwives ranks and promotions should be modified to match the diploma ranks and two (2) revealed that nurses and midwives ranks and promotions need to be modified because there are anomalies, but failed short to mention categorically the said anomalies.

Proposed Ranks and Salaries

Proposed Ranks

On the issue of proposed nurses and midwives ranks, the majority three (3) each indicated the nurses ranks as Staff Nurse (SN) – Senior Staff Nurse (SSN) – Nursing Officer (NO) – Senior Nursing Officer (SNO) – Principal Nursing Officer (PNO) – Deputy Director of Nursing Services (DDNS) – Director of Nursing Services 1 (DNS1) – Director of Nursing Service 2 (DNS2) – Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), SN-SSN-NO-SNO-Assistant PNO-PNO-CNO with the creation of more directors and a National director and Deputy Director of Midwifery Services (DDMS) should be added to the midwives ranks respectively. Two (2) respondents proposed the nurses' ranks as SN-NO-SNO, PNO- DDNS and added that unit heads should be directors. One (1) each revealed the nurses ranks to be SN- SSN-NO-SNO-PNO-DDNS-CNO-Assistant Director, then Director and Director of Nursing Services should be an open rank for people to aspire to and Staff Midwife (SM) – Senior Staff Midwife (SSM) – Midwifery Officer (MO) – Senior Midwifery Officer (SMO) – Principal Midwifery Officer (PMO) – Senior Principal Midwifery Officer (SPMO) – Midwifery Superintendent (MS) and the gap between SNO- PNO is wide. One respondent recall below:

“The assistant PNO position, we should have a thing like that so that the salary scale the PNO is 20H with the single spine salary structure, if the assistant PNO salary scale can be 20 L that will be OK” (INTERVIEW 3).

Another respondent stated:

“The DDNS position should be placed on the list of promotions so if PNO person work for five years can be promoted to DDNS then they should create more directors of nursing so that every region apart from the chief nursing officer position, we have directors with chief director at the \national headquarters. We can create the units to be headed by DDNS” (INTERVIEW 9).

Proposed Salaries

When the question about nurses' and midwives' salary was asked, the following salaries were proposed. The majority nine (9) indicated Salary was technical, three (3) stated Nurses salary should go with public servant salary. Two (2) said Midwives should be paid better because they do almost the same job with medical officers apart from C/S, one (1) each revealed Salary difference should be 500 or 600 and SM should not take less than 2000 and also all the other ranks have corresponding scales with their salaries which comes automatically. There should be a change in allowance percentage with promotions from SSN, five hundred should be to one salary at rank of NO and 250 added after NO in each rank, PNO should be place at 20H and Assistant PNO placed at 20L and 1000 should be added from NO going. A midwife interviewed stated as:

“Midwives should be paid better because they do almost the same job with the medical officers apart from Caesarean Section” (Interview 1).

Level of Education with Promotions and Ranks

When the issue of whether nurses and midwives' promotion should be done according to level of education was raised, the majority, fifteen (15) indicated that nurses and midwives' promotion should be done according to level of education, three (3) remained neutral on the subject matter, one (1) each said no to the question and did not response respectively. Below is a statement:

“Education adds value to the individual because we were doing certificate programs now we are doing degree, masters and PhD. It should be recognized so that it will be attractive for more people to go higher to improve on their knowledge and skills” (INTERVIEW 9).

Reasons for Promotion according to Level of Education

On the reason why nurses and midwives' promotion should be done according to level of education, the majority eleven (11) indicated that Education and experience/skills need to be blended, four (4) demonstrated that education add value and knowledge to one, one (1) each revealed that Nurses promotion has always been with level of education, the need to expand the profession and it gives quality of care outcome respectively. Below is a statement:

"Nurses ranks should be done according to level of education, in the first place you can't be a nurse if you are not educated that tells us that nursing need level of education and, level of education should be part of the nurses ranks and promotions. Highest level of education leads to better quality of health care and health outcomes." (Interview 21).

Proposed Ranks Structure with Level of Education

On the proposed nurses and midwives ranks structure with level of education; for Diploma, majority, ten (10) had the view that the rank of Staff Nurse (SN) was still appropriate, nine (9) indicated that the Diploma level of education should be placed at the rank of Senior Staff Nurse (SSN) while two (2) had a different view that Diploma students should also be placed at the rank of Nursing Officer as the Degree nurses.

For the straight Degree nurses, the majority ten (10) revealed that the straight degree nurses should be placed at the rank of Senior Staff Nurse (SSN), eight (8) indicated, they should be placed at the rank of Nursing Officer while three (3) said they should be placed at Senior Nursing Officer (SNO). For the Diploma top up to BSc in Nursing, majority twelve (12) revealed that they should be placed at the rank of Nursing Officer (NO) while five (5) indicated they should be placed at the rank of Senior Nursing Officer (SNO). For the master's students, nine (9) respondents proposed Deputy Director of Nursing Services (DDNS), five indicated

Principal Nursing Officer (PNO), four (4) revealed that master's holders should be placed at the rank of PNO with shortened interval for promotion, one (1) stated that master's students should be placed at the rank after superintendent, placed at the Research Department and at the specialist level respectively.

For the PhD level of education and ranks, ten (10) of the respondents revealed DDNS as the rank, three (3) proposed that consultancy level should be created for that level, two (2) each proposed Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) and fellowship respectively. One (1) each stated above DDNS, PNO and senior specialist level.

Promotion and Duration

On the duration for the promotion, the majority thirteen (13), indicated that nurses and midwives should be promoted 3years for all ranks, three (3) had the opinion that nurses should be promoted every 2 years. Two (2) respondents each revealed that, 2 years for first promotion and 3 years for all other ranks and SN-SSN (3 years), two years for all other ranks. One (1) each stated that duration of promotion should depend on level of education not years, 3 years for lower ranks and 4 years for the higher ranks and 2 years for first promotion, 4 years minimum and 5 years maximum for subsequent promotions and 1 year first promotion and 2 years for other promotions respectively. Here is interview 8 statement:

"First appointments years is ok, but the five years is too much, if they can reduce by one so that Northern part will be three and the rest of the regions four" (interview 8).

Nursing Research

All respondents indicated nursing research is very important.

Importance of Nursing Research

On the reason why Nursing Research is important, six (6) respondents indicated that research enables nurses to provide quality care and standards, five (5) each revealed that research help find solution to problems and

brings new innovations of care respectively. Two (2) indicated that research proof theories in nursing practice while one (1) each indicated that research evaluates nursing practice and help formulate policies respectively.

Research Publication

Research Publication been part of Nurses and Midwives' Promotion

On the question of whether research publication should be part of nurses and midwives' promotion, majority fourteen (14) respondents revealed that research should be part of nurses and midwives' promotion, three (3) indicated that research should not be part of promotions while five (5) remained neutral on the subject matter. A respondent stated:

"Looking at our current system, if one should carry out a research for a promotion it involves resources and time, it even still depends on staff commitment looking at staff appraisal it is a problem" (Interview 6).

Number of Research Publications should be made before Promotion

On the number of publications to be made before promotion, five (5) stated 1 publication from PNO and above, two (2) each revealed 1 Publication from SNO upwards at each level and 1 publication for all ranks. One (1) each stated, one (1) publication for every nurse, five publications should qualify one for promotion, 1 publication every year starting from SSN, 1 research in every 3 years for all levels and research publication should be gradual, 1 publication from NO and 2 or 3 publication for SNO, 4 publications for PNO and 5 for DDNS. A respondent revealed:

"It will be a laudable idea so that if you have more research like five publications it automatically qualifies you for promotion. I think that one will increase the number of research we have in the clinical area" (Interview 9).

Nursing Education

Entry point of nursing profession

Most respondents (19) indicated yes for nursing to start at the level of first degree while 2 indicated no.

The reasons given by majority who said *yes*, they preferred nursing to start at the level of first degree varied. Majority (7) revealed it will allow for better negotiation. Five (5) respondents each indicated to improve on the profession and meet international standards respectively as the reasons for nursing entry requirements to be a degree instead of at the Diploma level. One (1) respondent each indicated for better planning, reduction of cost and stress and avoidance of disparities in ranks and promotions as the reason for nursing profession to start at the degree level. Meet interview 8 below:

"They should scrap off our training colleges but if they do that, that system will go off. We were agitating for that and before we realised they went back to Enrolled Nursing" (Interview 8).

Discussion

Satisfaction of Nurses and Midwives Promotions and Ranks

Most nurses and midwives expressed their dissatisfaction about the current nurses and midwives' promotions. The various categories of nurses and midwives admitted that there is the need for modification of the nurses and midwives ranks in Ghana. The following ranking and promotion levels were proposed by respondents: SN- SSN-NO-SNO-PNO-Assistant Director of Nursing Services (ADNS) - DDNS- CNO-DNS1-DNS2. This is like findings in a nursing research at King's College University, London which revealed that the National Health Service (NHS) is failing its ambitious nurses. It further indicated that, a few years into their career, despite the professions high vacancy rate, many nurses are not where they envisaged, they would be [12].

Clearly, these promotions which are intrinsically linked to educational levels equally attract higher salaries and remunerations, thus are highly likely to increase job satisfaction.

Reasons for Modification

On the reason for modification of Nurses and Midwives, the majority, eight (8) of the respondents indicated that the nurses and midwives should be modified to suit current nursing dynamics and career progression.

This is also consistent with the findings in [12], which states that for one to progress or promoted, there is the need to gradually ensure that, you have knowledge and competence in every aspect of your current role. This may mean gaining new skills and perfecting some of your old skills.

Level of Education with Promotions and Ranks

A degree can open multiple doors and help you find out what your passion is 'she also indicated that, many hospitals uses master's degree as a requirement for entry into management positions and the degree is an opportunity to learn new skills [17]. literature shows that a new degree produces a more rounded nurse [9]. This supports the study findings which revealed that nurses and midwives' promotion should be done according to level of education. However, the study findings contradict a finding by [11], which states that Nurses who graduate from bachelor's degree programs typically qualify for supervisory, rather than entry-level positions.

The majority, eleven (11), indicated that Education and experience/skills need to be blended, four (4) demonstrated that education add value and knowledge to one. This is consistent with Nursing Time report which states that, in order to progress or promoted, gradually ensure that, you have knowledge and competence in every aspect of your current role. This may mean gaining new skills and perfecting some old skills [12].

Importance of Nursing Research

The study indicated that research enables nurses to provide quality care and standards and help find solution to problems and bring new innovations of care [18]. This supports [12], which shows, there is a rapidly changing role in nursing, offering nurses ever increasing choices. Most senior roles require nurses to possess a range of experience and skills including clinical specialism, research, management, and education.

Entry point of Nursing Profession

The study findings indicated that nursing should start at the level of first degree with the reason that it allows for better negotiation. One major publication "Future of Nursing Report." that made an impact in nursing education [3] recommends nearly all entry-level nurses (80%) to hold a bachelor's degree by 2020. The [19] has suggested that while the Bachelor of Science in nursing does not address all the future educational and clinical expectations; "it would at least expose future practitioners to these fields and would help engender a broader knowledge base of healthcare and its place in society". This statement by the IOM strongly suggests in confirmation of their stand on nursing training at all levels at the bachelor's degree as the entry level into nursing practice [20].

Conclusion

The study concluded that, nurses and midwives in the Tamale Metropolis are dissatisfied with the current nurses and midwives ranks and promotions in Ghana. A reason for modification of Nurses and Midwives ranks and promotions was that it should be modified to suit current nursing dynamics and career progression. They further proposed the modified ranks as: SN- SSN-NO-SNO-PNO-Assistant Director (ADNS) - DDNS- CNO-DNS1-DNS2-, with the creation of more directors at both district/municipalities/metropolitan/regional levels and a National director at GHS and MOH.

In addition, DDMS should be added to the midwifery ranks. Promotion duration proposed was also that nurses and midwives should be promoted three (3) years for all ranks alongside with evidence of published research papers not less than one or two, progressing to five, at subsequent promotion levels. The emphasis placed on the importance of nursing research is to ensure that nurses remain active learners and well abreast with nursing and midwifery advancements. Accordingly, published research papers should be made part of the requirements for nurses and midwives' ranks and promotions.

Recommendations

Nursing and Midwifery Council of Ghana (NMC, Ghana)

To make it mandatory to have nursing and midwifery entry level into professional practice to bachelor's degree and possibly with a starting rank of Nursing Officer with a commensurate wage.

Ghana Health Services/Ministry of Health, Ghana

To come out with a policy on nursing and midwifery ranking to be alongside education. Any qualification below the proposed entry point should be a *Practice Nurse Assistant*.

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The Ghana Registered Nurses and Midwives Association

To make it a policy to educate and sensitise all members to upgrade to a minimum of bachelor's degree or more to remain attractive and rewarding in the professions.

The Ghana College of Nurses and Midwives (GCNM)

To continue to enforce their current policy of bachelor's degree being the entry level into its specialization programmes. They should also extend it to cover all other associate programmes.

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Conflict of Interest

The author indicates no conflict of interest.

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